1600/1478.

A VINDICATION OF THE CHARACTER OF SIR RICHARD HILL, BART.

[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

CHARACTER

OF

Sir RICHARD HILL, Bart.

FROM THE

Libellous Charges and Defamatory Aſperſions of a Writer, calling himſelf "FIDELIS:"

ADDRESSED TO THE

BURGESSES AND FREEMEN OF THE TOWN OF SHREWSBURY.

By the Rev. RICHARD DE COURCY,
Vicar of St. Alkmond's, Shrewſbury.

Falſus honor juvat et MENDAX INFAMIA *terret,*
Quem niſi mendoſum et mendacem?——— HOR.

SHREWSBURY:
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1796.

1600 | 1478.

A

VINDICATION, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

WERE I influenced by the law of retaliation, or could I, for one moment, feel disposed to imitate the extravagant incivility of a writer calling himself "*Fidelis*", who has lately accosted SIR RICHARD HILL by name, in language fraught with all that malevolence could suggest, or detraction circulate; this address would, in that case, have been directly made to *Lord Berwick*, and not to *you*. But, as the highest degree of provocation can never justify a departure from the laws of candour and urbanity; and as I feel ambitious now as upon a former occasion, of submiting to *your* consideration the remarks which I am going to make on the address of "*Fidelis*", I cannot justly entertain any apprehension for the fate of *this* appeal, when *you* are the judges, and when I reflect how *very successfully* Sir Richard's own fair Statement of Facts, respecting the present contest, has operated on the understanding and conduct of many of the free and respectable Electors of the Town of Shrewsbury.

The hiſtory of the world, Gentlemen, abundantly evinces, that the faireſt pretenſions to rectitude of principle and unblemiſhed reputation are no ſecurity againſt the ſhafts of calumny; while it proves alſo, that no brightneſs of intellect, or any one endowment, that virtue, politeneſs, or erudition can communicate, is neceſſary to form the character of thoſe adventurers in aſperſion, who defame the excellence which they cannot attain, ſecretly ſtab the reputation which they dare not openly attack, and are bold in invective, only becauſe they are *not known*. Behind the rampart of *ſecreſy*, and under the aſſumption of a feigned or varied ſignature, they think themſelves ſecure; ſtudiouſly avoiding every circumſtance that might lead to detection, and dreading an ingenuous and fair diſcuſſion before the public, becauſe moſt likely to bring their cauſe into diſrepute, and to exhibit them in that juſt light of deteſtation, in which men of diſcernment and virtue muſt view ſuch cowardly aſſailants. But how any reſpectable combination of men, can think themſelves honoured by ſuch diſgraceful patrons of their cauſe; or, how any individual can take refuge from the remonſtrances of conſcience, in the hope of concealment, would to me appear abſolutely problematical; did I not know, that the veil of darkneſs is, with ſome men, a ſufficient apology for the perpetration of the moſt enormous crimes, and that if an unprincipled calumniator can eſcape the cognizance, or juſt keep within the boundaries of the *civil* law, all reſtraints, which the

ſanctions

ſanctions and laws of heaven ought to impoſe on the mind, are inſulted and diſregarded.

How great a contraſt is the fair and open conduct of Sir Richard Hill, to the diſingenuous and inſidious manoeuvres of "*Fidelis*"! The worthy Baronet by putting his *name* to his publications, has given his adverſaries every advantage they could wiſh, by inviting diſcuſſion in the moſt undiſguiſed form imaginable. He has appealed to documents in ſupport of ſome unpleaſant truths which he found himſelf neceſſitated to bring forward, that thoſe, who are diſpoſed to controvert either the one or the other, might not be at a loſs where to find the author. And, ſurely a conduct marked with ſo much ingenuouſneſs, while it intitles him to reſpect from the public, ought to be admitted as an implicit proof of the *conſcious rectitude* of his own mind, and the goodneſs of the cauſe in which he is embarked; in the defence of which, however ſtimulated by fraternal affection, or prompted by the keen ſenſe of unmerited injury; yet it is evident that truth inſpires him with fortitude to ſuſtain the ſhock of open controverſy, or to meet with patience and ſilence, the clandeſtine and anonymous attacks of ſuch men as "*Fidelis*." From any other writer I am perſuaded that Sir Richard Hill's conduct would in this inſtance at leaſt, have extorted praiſe and provoked imitation. But, in *him*, it only rouſes all the workings of malevolence, and gives birth to the extravagant effuſions of acrimony, clothed in language of the moſt

moſt unqualified and vulgar aſperſion. In proof of this, I ſhall now quote this writer's own words.

Among the various CHARGES he brings againſt Sir Richard Hill the following are the moſt prominent. He ſays that "his *head* is not "capable of comprehending a plain deduction of "*common ſenſe*; that his *heart* will not let him "feel or *adopt* that line of action which pro-"priety and *rectitude* preſcribe; that *through* "*him* the awful name of religion has been aſperſ-"ed; that his preſent conduct has given a *deep* "*ſcandal* to all ſincere believers; that he was the "SOLE cauſe of the abominable practice of *opening* "*public houſes*; that he ENCOURAGES *drunkenneſs*, "*ſenſuality*, *idleneſs*, and *waſte* of ALL kinds; that "he *diſregards* ANY MEANS, however PROFLI-"GATE, if he can but compaſs his end; that he "does *not care* what IMMORALITY, what MI-"SERY and PROFLIGACY he *cauſes*, ſo long as by "*this* means he can ſecure a ſeat in Parliament to "his Brother; and that HIS RELIGION IS VAIN."

It will no doubt fill you with aſtoniſhment, Gentlemen, that the very man, from whoſe pen I have faithfully quoted this long liſt of unfounded and calumnious imputations, the moſt groſs and unchriſtian I ever yet ſaw in ſo ſmall a compaſs, appeals to the ſacred Scriptures. If there was any one thing that could ſhock me more than another, it was his daring to have recourſe to the volume of inſpiration, thus to ſanction the moſt unbridled licen-

licentiouſneſs of expreſſion, and to make the awful words of ſcripture the vehicle of the moſt envenomed poiſon of invective; ſealing his own condemnation at the moment he was condemning another, and by thoſe very quotations, which with impotent malevolence he would apply to Sir Richard Hill. Can any thing be a more perfect tranſcript of the temper of that malignant ſpirit, who once quoted ſcripture for the purpoſe of ſullying the moſt innocent and illuſtrious character the world ever ſaw? And would it not be eaſy to have ſupplied this writer with a *name*, different from what he has aſſumed, that would have been more congenial with his temper, and characteriſtic of his cauſe; though by no means flattering to either?

It is well known to be a diſtinguiſhing feature of thorough-paced profligacy, when it has arrived at the higheſt pitch of turpitude and audacity, to make VIRTUE the object of its attack. Men of this deſcription, having, themſelves, *no character to loſe*, are therefore bold and deſperate in their plans of aggreſſion on men of virtue and reſpectability. As ſome infirmity is incident to every human being, *that* is in general ſingled out, to render exaggeration plauſible, and to give ample ſcope to malignity. But he, who wiſhes to complete his ſyſtem of defamation, and to ſtamp it with all the refinement of wickedneſs, has only to pretend a veneration for the virtue, which he has not; to quote perverted or miſapplied

miſapplied ſcripture, in recommendation of general principles or precepts, which he himſelf neither underſtands nor practiſes; and thus to finiſh the deſperate farce, in which hypocriſy is blended with impiety, and unprovoked and wanton malignity with both. And, if, to all this ſhould be ſuperadded the ſtrong temptation of being reputed the champion of a party, and the ſtill ſtronger one of making the preſs the medium of his own venality and corruption, the incitements in every point of view are then ſo alluring, that, as long as he remains *anonymous* and *concealed*, he becomes bold, from the hope of popular impoſition. But ſhould a lucky incident *bring him to light*, his ſanguine hopes are blaſted in a moment, his party left in diſgrace, and all the temporary conſequence which its patronage gave him, evaporates in inſignificance, or terminates in infamy.

How far this repreſentation, in any or all its parts, may be applicable to "*Fidelis*," I preſume not to ſay; time only can diſcover. One thing, however, I will venture to affirm, for the honor of the Town of Shrewſbury, that no man *in* it, could be found, who would commit to paper the maſs of untruths and aſperſions that this writer has thrown together, in the idea he would wiſh the public to imbibe reſpecting Sir Richard Hill: And I would hope that, when an hour of cool reflection ſucceeds the moment of paſſionate emotion and party-prejudice, even his *employers* muſt recoil with horror and indignation at

at the bold and unprecedented ſtigmas, which he has affixed to the name and character of a reſpectable Baronet. It would be the ſevereſt ſatire on *their* principles and their party, were I to entertain or ſuggeſt a contrary ſuppoſition; becauſe, I ſhould, in that caſe, ſuppoſe them capable of taking part with invective againſt virtue, and of encouraging with cool malignity, the depredation made on a man's deareſt property, his CHARACTER; and of being acceſſary to the aſſaſſination of it by ſome concealed and deſperate ruffian.

The deſign, the dark and diſhonourable deſign of this writer is, to ſtigmatize Sir Richard Hill as a fool and a knave, as deſtitute of common ſenſe and common rectitude, his *head* weak, and his *heart* depraved. But how does he *prove* this? Only by *aſſerting* it. For, if proof in argument be a fair concluſion drawn from clear and eſtabliſhed premiſſes, there is not the ſhadow of demonſtration in any thing he has written. You are to take all upon his bare aſſertion, as if he had an intuitive knowledge of the human heart, or claimed the prerogative of being an oracle in criticiſm, from whoſe judgment there lay no appeal. But that his claim to ſuch pretenſions is, in the one inſtance unfounded, and in the other impious, appears evident from his ſtyle of writing; while the character of Sir Richard Hill as a *writer* and as a *member of ſociety* has nothing to fear even from a more formidable adverſary in criticiſm and defamation than "*Fidelis*". The only

only aſſumption in argument, on which he builds his heavieſt charges is demonſtrably falſe. He aſſerts that the worthy Baronet "was the SOLE *cauſe* of the abominable practice of opening public houſes." Whereas the *real truth* is, that they were opened *before* Sir Richard came from London; that he never gave his poſitive concurrence to the meaſure, but ſincerely lamented it; that the example was FIRST *ſet by the Attingham party*, whoſe entertainments were diſtinguiſhed in ſeveral inſtances by diſorder and exceſs; that every precaution was taken by Mr. J. Hill and his agents to prevent all irregularity at *their* ſuppers, and that their efforts were ſucceſsful. And ſo zealous has Sir Richard been in counteracting the effects produced by ſo large a conſumption of the neceſſaries of life in the courſe of the entertainments, that he *took the lead* in the benevolent plan of ſending a large quantity of flour to Shrewſbury, to be ſold at a very reduced price for the benefit of the poor. The other worthy Member intends putting the ſame mode of relief in operation; and Lord Berwick, it ſeems, much to his honor, has it in contemplation to follow the example of both. Some delay on the part of Sir Richard in the execution of his benevolent purpoſe, afforded an opportunity to the malice of "*Fidelis*" to inſinuate that Sir R. only "TALKED" of it; as if he would ſtrip that Gentleman of all pretenſions to common veracity, and repreſent him as ſacrificing the cauſe of truth and humanity to the dictates of vanity and oſtentation,

tation, and thereby incurring the riſque of blaſting his reputation for ever in the opinion of the public. But, unfortunately for the cauſe and the character of "*Fidelis*," at the very moment that he penned his ſlander on this head, the flour was actually ſent to Shrewſbury, and the diſtribution of it delayed, only till Counſel's opinion could be taken on the ſtrict legality of the act, pending the preſent conteſt. This ſingle inſtance ſhews with what eagerneſs this writer, like the baſiliſk, which, naturaliſts ſay, will fly at even the *picture* of a man, is diſpoſed to ſeize the ſhadow of an occaſion to give vent to his malevolence, and fly with ſavage ferocity at the hand of *virtue* and *beneficence* ſtretched forth to the relief of the poor, only becauſe it happens to be the hand of Sir RICHARD HILL!!

Several of the particulars introduced in the preceding paragraph, have been already urged in "a fair and authentic ſtatement of facts," written by the author of this addreſs, in anſwer to a precipitate and calumnious paper ſigned "*An Inhabitant.*" The refutation on that occaſion was ſo complete, that no reply has been ever made to the defence then given, of the character of Mr. Hill and of his aſſociates in the cauſe of liberty, and independence. I ſhrewdly ſuſpect that I am at this moment combating the ſame author aſſuming a different ſignature, for the purpoſe of diſguiſe and calumniation. Beaten off the ground of controverſy in that inſtance, and foiled in his diſhonourable attempt, through the circulation of

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the falſe and idle rumour about the "four fractures," to aſperſe the town of Shrewſbury, and to injure the reputation of our preſent member; it is poſſible, indeed, that the author of the paper alluded to, the author of that with the ſignature of *Fidelis*—a title moſt unwarrantably aſſumed —and the author of *The Hilliad* now in circulation, publiſhed with a *falſe name*, may be one and the ſame perſon, that identical *bard* who has ſo often ſaluted the public with his doggerels and contemptible ſatire. Conjecture may not, perhaps, fix this identification in all its parts with perfect accuracy. But ſome of the correſponding features in the notes of *The Hilliad*, and of the papers addreſſed to Sir Richard Hill, ſeem to decypher one and the ſame author. There is indeed one difference in point of ſtyle. *The Hilliad* * is moſt miſerably dull, and perfectly harmleſs. The paper ſigned "*Fidelis*," is more animated, becauſe *there*, not genius, but malignity in proſe was to ſtrike the envenomed blow. But, in both, Sir Richard Hill is the object of ſlander and deriſion. Let

* This Poem, on which ſo much praiſe in anticipation has been exhauſted, and from which ſuch wonderful benefits to a certain party have been expected, has at laſt made its appearance. A *Poem*, in the legitimate ſenſe of that word, it is not. It is a poor, dull, and, in many places, incorrect verſification in doggerel rhymes, of ſome parts of Sir Richard's book; with the diſadvantage of not retaining the animation of his ſtyle, or the vivacity and pleaſantry of his remarks. *The Hilliad* is what the French call, mere *rimaille*, where the rhymes are ſo incorrect, that attention is not always paid even to the harmonious jingling of the couplets. Whoever be the author, it is evident that the Attingham Party have changed their Bard *for the worſe*. In the *notes*, ſeveral

Let me now, Gentlemen, recall your attention to the charge againſt Sir R. "that he does not "care what *immorality*, what *miſery*, and *profligacy* "he cauſes, ſo long as by *this* means he can ſe- "cure a ſeat in parliament for his brother." Confident and bold as this allegation is, I am perſuaded *you* give it no credit; for none it deſerves, and none it will obtain with thoſe who know any thing of the Gentleman ſo unjuſtly vilified. The author, who has had the honor for many years to call him his friend. and has had many opportunities of knowing him intimately, thinks himſelf warranted to declare, that he believes Sir Richard Hill incapable of adopting any means inconſiſtent with the great laws of truth, juſtice, and temperance, to obtain the higheſt earthly acquiſition. No, I am perſuaded that every ſentiment and principle of his heart would recoil at the very idea of ſeeking the honors of the world at the expence of that virtue which infinitely tranſcends them in value; and that he would deſpiſe and reject both for himſelf and his

 brother,

ſeveral *Latin* ſentences are introduced. But a man may *quote* Latin, and not *underſtand* it. And that this is really the caſe with the renowned author of the Hilliad, will appear evident upon conſulting the laſt words of the note p. 2. Who could have thought that a writer, who talks about literature, and aſſumes the air of a Critic, but who ſeems to be better acquainted with *plays* than with the *claſſicks*, ſhould not be able to write two words of correct Latin? For the miſerable blunder *he* has made there, old Buſby would have flogged a boy in the loweſt form. And for this, as well as worſe faults, this writer merits the ſevereſt flagellation which ſatire, truth, and ſound criticiſm can inflict on oſtentatious and incorrigible pedantry.

brother, the greateſt ſenatorial dignity, rather than create "*miſery*" to a ſingle individual, or deſignedly promote the corruption of his morals. There is not a man living more ſtudious to conſult the happineſs and welfare of all around him; more zealous to diſcourage immorality of every kind; or more prompt to ſeek occaſions of teſtifying his compaſſion, charity, and beneficence to the poor; multitudes of whom continually reap the fruits of his liberality, and by expedients too at once calculated to correct vice and promote induſtry.

Compare this picture of the moral, ſocial, and religious character of Sir Richard Hill, with the horrible caricature exhibited of him by the pen of "*Fidelis*," and it is hardly poſſible to conceive a greater contraſt. From *him* the portrait comes forth with every feature of folly, weakneſs, and profligacy that can diſgrace the human character, without one tincture of intellectual or moral endowment to ſoften the coloring. But it is the hand of a malignant foe that holds the pencil, and the jaundiced eye of envy that views the original. No wonder that every feature ſhould be diſtorted, and the portrait receive its deformity from a hand hackneyed, probably, in defamation. But when *truth* and *friendſhip* are allowed to ſpeak, VIRTUE in ſuch characters as Sir Richard Hill, ſhines with additional luſtre when emerging from the clouds of calumny, as the ſun does, after the miſts that interrupted its rays. If in this eulogium I have been

been more prolix than I intended, let the ungenerous defamation that provoked it, be my apology. For what generous mind, ſuſceptive of emotions of friendſhip and gratitude, can help enlarging in panegyric, when detraction is ſo bold and diffuſe? or ſhewing an honeſt indignation, when a friend is attacked by the envenomed tooth of ſlander, and a reſpectable Baronet is repreſented, falſely and injuriouſly repreſented, as deſtitute of common ſenſe, common honour, and common honeſty?

And what has he done to provoke all this? Why, he ſupports a Brother's intereſts againſt his opponents? And does not Lord Berwick do the ſame? Where the caſe is exactly ſimilar, muſt his Lordſhip only do right, and Sir Richard only do wrong? If fraternal affection prompts to bear the weight of expence in one caſe, and paſſes without one hint of diſapprobation from "*Fidelis*," muſt it in the other meet with nothing but *abuſe?* muſt Sir Richard be vilified for giving *one* entertainment to his friends at his manſion? And is the Noble Lord to bear the palm of excluſive and tacit commendation, when on numerous occaſions *his* houſe has been ~~on any days of the week~~ also, the receptacle of freemen indulged with ſcenes of conviviality? Muſt nothing but "miſery, profligacy, and immorality" be the attendants of the Baronet, whoſe *own example* makes it improbable that theſe ſhould be his gueſts and companions? and nothing but *felicity*, *morality*, and *temperance* form the excluſive

cluſive train of the Noble Lord? By what rule of COMPARISON, of REASON, or of CANDOUR, can this be ſuppoſed or aſſerted? "*Fidelis*" quotes ſeveral of the marks of heavenly wiſdom, but ſeems to have forgotten, that it is "*without* PARTIALITY." But impartiality is never conſulted, where a party is to be ſerved. Such writers quote ſcripture only to deceive, and mutilate it, to ſhew the cauſe they eſpouſe. And as for WISDOM and RELIGION, let not words of ſuch ſacred import be ever proſtituted to ſanction or recommend, what the high mandates of both unite to condemn by a ſentence of the deepeſt reprobation.

One thing I would beg leave to whiſper ſoftly into the ear of "*Fidelis*," and his whole party of poets, caſuiſts, moraliſts, criticks, and geniuſes, whether of patrician or plebeian origin, *viz.* that, as no ſmall portion of INFIRMITY is connected with moſt human beings, no large body of men can be without ſome individuals, to whom ſatire might hold up its *glaſs*, and on whom ſarcaſm might indulge a *ſneer*. The many *perſonal* addreſſes made to Sir Richard Hill *by name*, and full of indecency and obloquy, have tempted ſtrongly to recrimination. The author of this addreſs has reſiſted and means to reſiſt every ſuch temptation; not through *fear*, for he has none for himſelf, but from motives which the moſt ſacred principles ſuggeſt and enforce. But he cannot anſwer for *others*. And there are occaſions

ſions, on which, when virtue is ſcouted with the opprobrious doggerels of venal poetaſters, and men of real reſpectability are ſtabbed in their *moral* character without being allowed to know the hand of the aſſaſſin who holds the dagger; even patience may be overloaded with too heavy a preſſure, and human nature, too prone to be vindictive, at laſt be tempted to repel injury by its own weapons, and to retaliate, to ſhew that the adverſe party are *not invulnerable*. "*Fidelis*" himſelf ſhould take ſpecial care, ſince HE clamours with ſo much vehemence againſt *immorality*, that *his own morals* be ſo immaculate as to bear the cloſeſt inveſtigation. For, ſhould that hand be *leprous*, which wielded the pen in defence of moral purity, how will he ever be able to take it out of his boſom again, to purge that turpitude from others, which may ſtick to himſelf with the deepeſt ſtain of contamination? or to attack an adverſary, when he may be vulnerable himſelf? A *teſt* will be propoſed to him, before theſe remarks are concluded; to which if he accede, it will then appear what his practice is, as well as his theory. This will probably prove a trial by *ordeal* to him.

Hitherto, Gentlemen, we have viewed this writer in the capacity of a man ſcattering the arrows and firebrands of invective, without any reſpect for decency or argument, or any well-ſupported appeal to the evidence of facts;—the random effuſions of a deſultory and defamatory

pen

pen, that pays no regard to the dictates of truth and honor, ſo that a little *ſport* may be given to licentious ridicule, at the expence of virtue. We have ſeen him, in his mock attempts to "vindicate the awful name of "*religion*," violating one of its moſt expreſs commands, *not to bear falſe witneſs againſt his neighbour*; pretending to recommend the mild, benevolent, pacific, and charitable principles of chriſtianity, at the moment, that, in flagrant violation of them all, he was paſſing the moſt ſevere *judgment* on the character and pretenſions, the *heart* and *head*, of a Gentleman who had done nothing to provoke ſuch unqualified ſlander! His deſign, in this diſhonorable and unchriſtian aggreſſion on the reſpectable Baronet, was *profeſſedly* to repreſent him as only "making a *parade*," of his attachment to the cauſe of virtue, and the faith of the goſpel, as having "no religion," or one ſpark of genuine "rectitude" of heart, and conſequently to undertake "the taſk of EXPOSING him." This laſt branch of his executed taſk he calls "a *diſguſting*" one. But can you credit him? Is not the *complacency* he takes in the execution of it, as evident as the malice, with which it is too ſtrongly tinctured? And with this aggravation of the whole, is it poſſible to conceive an undertaking more deſperate in deſign, or more unprincipled in execution? And is this the man, who obtrudes himſelf on the public as a corrector of grievances, a champion for virtue, and a reformer of manners?

But,

But, Gentlemen, it was reſerved for the mercenary and flagitious pen of ſuch a writer as "*Fidelis*" to make one deſperate attack more on the character of Sir RICHARD HILL. He charges that Gentleman with "THE MEAN AND CORRUPT TRAFFIC OF THE PUBLIC MONEY to pay "his brother's curate;" though one ſhilling of that money never paſſed through his hands for any purpoſe whatever. The charge here refers to a tranſaction, in which, for Sir Richard's benevolent efforts to procure for an indigent individual ſome place of emolument by his intereſt with the Miniſtry, he was recompenſed by the petitioner for his munificence in one inſtance, and his charitable exertions in another, with a moſt libellous publication; of which "*Fidelis*" is a perfect counter-part. *Woolley* and *he* may be claſſed together as twin-aſſociates * in the ſame intereſt; and the fate of both would be perfectly ſimilar, were the *latter* to receive *his* juſt deſerts. In the fury of invective he has brought forward an accuſation which, before a court of judicature, would ſubject him to the infamy and penalty due to libellers. And it will be no ſmall teſtimony of Sir Richard's lenity, if he does not inquire *where* or *by whom* this attack was made and printed, and commence a PROSECUTION againſt the man, who could, for the ſake of gain, ſuffer

 ſuch

* *Arcades ambo! Par nobile fratrum!*

ſuch a *proſtitution of his preſs* †, againſt a character ſo well known and univerſally eſteemed.

Whilſt I deplore the extravagant height to which this writer has carried his defamation of Sir Richard, by charging him, moſt falſely and injuriouſly, with "THE MEAN AND CORRUPT TRAFFIC OF THE PUBLIC MONEY," I triumph in the opportunity of vindicating his character, on the ground of legal deciſion and the higheſt and moſt reſpectable authority. The caſe, to which "*Fidelis*" alludes, was brought before *the Court of King's Bench*. The libeller, Mr. Woolley, was convicted on the fulleſt evidence, and found guilty. But what more particularly ſuits the preſent ſubject, is, the OPINION which the NOBLE LORD, who preſides in that Court, and the HON. MR. ERSKINE, one of the Counſel for the proſecutor, expreſſed of the CHARACTER of SIR RICHARD HILL. The words of MR. ERSKINE are the following. "And, Gentlemen, upon whom is "this

† Of the effuſions of mere pleaſantry, no man of ſenſe and good-humour will ever take any notice. But when the preſs is made the vehicle of OBSCENITY and BLASPHEMY, as hath been lately done in one inſtance, and of ACTIONABLE DEFAMATION, as now occurs in another, thoſe who preſide over it, and attempt to juſtify the fact by calling it "a *job* which a Printer ſhould not refuſe" deſerve the utmoſt ſeverity of cenſure, and even ſomething *worſe*. The author is in poſſeſſion of a curious original of the firſt moſt execrable nature, and *knows* the *preſs* from whence it iſſued and the PRINTER who even *juſtified* the fact of publication, though indeed not upon any principle of *morality*, *decency*, or *honour*, but upon that of the *auri ſacra fames!* But, *tenderneſs* ſuggeſts reaſons for a concealment of his name. I wou'd, however, recommend it to him not to commit the ſame offence a *third* time.

" this calumny caſt? Upon a man, the MOST BE-
" NEFICENT AND INOFFENSIVE in the world! And,
" in what manner inoffenſive? Not from ob-
" ſcurity or poverty; no, he is poſſeſſor of one of
" the moſt ſplendid inheritances in this iſland,
" and which, by the acceſſion of art and creative
" cultivation, he has converted into a ſort of para-
" diſe; NOT TO RIOT there *in criminal debauchery*,
" unmindful of HIM who placed him in it, but
" whoſe *whole life* is a pattern of MODESTY, PIE-
" TY, and GOODNESS; whoſe firſt gratification in
" the great expence which he creates, is, the re-
" lief and ſuſtentation of the POOR, whom he
" feeds by it; whoſe houſe is the SEAT of HO-
" NEST, VIRTUOUS, Engliſh HOSPITALITY, and
" the receptacle of every thing which renders
" life comfortable or delightful *.

The Lord Chief Juſtice in the courſe of the Trial, ſaid, " It is to be lamented that this man " (Woolley) ſhould have written ſuch a book " attacking the character of ſuch a man (as Sir " Richard Hill): it is poſſible from a long ac-" quaintance, one might think more of a man " than he deſerves; but to be ſure *there never* " *lived upon earth a better man* ‡." And again in the cloſe of the Trial his Lordſhip ſaid, " From " what I *know* of the proſecutor, the wiſeſt way " for the defendant would have been to truſt to " his (Sir Richard's) *mercy, for a* BETTER MAN *I* " *don't know within the circle of human nature.*" ‖

Now,

* See " The Trial of the Rev. W. Woolley, Clerk," p. 13.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 18. ‖ *Ibid.* p. 24.

Now, Gentlemen, caſt your eye upon the libellous and undeſerved aſperſion of Sir Richard Hill by "*Fidelis*," and compare it with the eulogium of one of the firſt Counſel in the kingdom, and with the opinion of the Lord Chief Juſtice of a ſupreme Court of Judicature, and ſay, *whoſe* teſtimony deſerves the greater credit. The libeller has exhibited him as one of the *worſt* of men, deſtitute of one virtuous principle that can adorn human nature, or render ſociety ſecure. Lord KENYON, on the contrary, in the ſolemn capacity of JUDGE, and the exerciſe of his office, ſitting in judgment on the caſe before him, declares, in the face of a crouded Court, that he "did not know a BETTER MAN within the circle "of human nature". And his Lordſhip and Mr. Erſkine both ſpeak from their *knowledge* of the excellence of his character. But had he been guilty of "the mean and corrupt traffic of the "public money" as his libeller has ſaid, can you ſuppoſe that ſuch enormous guilt would have eſcaped the notice of ſuch an upright and penetrating Judge as Lord Kenyon? Or that, under ſuch circumſtances he would have paid ſuch a ſtudied tribute of ſuperlative commendation to the excellence of Sir Richard's character? I am ſure, you cannot ſuppoſe either the one or the other; and that you do not heſitate to decide in favour of the juridical deciſion of the Noble Lord, againſt the unſupported and malevolent attack of an adverſary; who, if called to an account in a court of judicature would be placed in the humiliating predica-

ment

ment of the man whoſe crime he has imitated, and whoſe fate he could only eſcape, through the generoſity of his printer. After ſuch a teſtimony, ſo reſpectable and ſo deciſive, it would be an affront to your underſtandings and your virtue, to ſuppoſe, that you, Gentlemen, could entertain a doubt concerning the validity of the evidence I have adduced, or the completeneſs of the vindication I have offered to your notice. So firmly rooted is your good opinion of Sir Richard, that to many of you, I am perſuaded, the taſk I have undertaken appears ſuperfluous: but to others, however, it may be neceſſary, from the eaſy credulity with which ſome imbibe reports to the diſadvantage of their ſuperiors, and circulate them to the prejudice of ſociety. Beſides, there is a pleaſure in obviating the malicious triumphs of party-ſpirit, which grows elate often even to inſult, when its challenges are not accepted, and conſtrues ſilence into an argument of fear or conſcious criminality, though the defenders it chooſes are often below notice, and unworthy of reply.

I have now but one point more to lay before you, Gentlemen, which, as in other inſtances, is moſt ſhamefully miſrepreſented, as it comes from the pen of the unworthy "*Fidelis*." It has been often urged by Sir Richard, as an argument, among other forcible reaſons, why his Brother ſhould not be thruſt out of his ſeat in Parliament by his young relations, that their Father's will appointed Mr. Hill one of the executors, and that

that in the faithful diſcharge of the truſt veſted in him, he ſuſtained no ſmall fatigue and trouble in the arrangement of their affairs and the care of their fortune; a fact that cannot be denied, and that gratitude ought not to overlook. To this ſtatement which I make upon the very beſt authority, "*Fidelis*" ſays "You cannot but know, "that the *whole burden* of ſettling the late Lord "B.'s affairs, with very *few exceptions* indeed, "devolved on another perſon."

From the very nature of the caſe, this cannot be ſtrictly true. The other executor, living in Shrewſbury, had, it is allowed, the books and papers relative to the late Lord B.'s concerns. But Mr. Hill had all the moſt laborious part, and attended to all the buſineſs *in London*. His rides from Prees to Shrewſbury were very frequent, and taken often at great inconvenience. And I ſhould imagine that an Attorney would not have done the ſame buſineſs for twice the amount of the legacy of 200l. Nothing therefore can be a more groſs miſrepreſentation than to ſay "that "he interfered little further in the executorſhip "than *barely to receive* the legacy bequeathed "him." While the facts above ſtated are indiſputable, this writer's allegations, like almoſt every thing that comes from his pen, are embarraſſed with the higheſt degree of improbability. But he goes on "You muſt likewiſe know that he was "*not Guardian*, as has been endeavoured to be "inculcated on the minds of the town." By whom?

whom? not by Sir Richard Hill*. The term *Guardian* as applied to Mr. Hill's ſhare of the truſt, is never once uſed in any part of "Hard "Meaſure" or "The Supplement" to it. The office of Guardian, as far as *education* was concerned, neceſſarily devolved on the neareſt relative. But does it follow that the relation in which Mr. Hill ſtood to the Children of the late Lord B. by the will of their Father, excludes every idea of Guardianſhip? when their property was ſubmitted to his care, and their affairs arranged by the moſt ſedulous exertions of fidelity and diligence? Is it honorable or grateful now to throw the veil of oblivion over facts and the truſt to which they refer, for the purpoſe of leſſening obligation, and extenuating the aggravations of an unworthy requital? The deſign is obvious; but it will miſs its aim. That the *relation*, the *confidential friend*, and *executor* of the will of the late Noble Lord, ſhould be treated as he has been, is a fact not to be eaſily obliterated from the minds of the Electors: and I am perſuaded, the impreſſion it has made on them will never be weakened by any thing that can be urged by ſuch a writer as "*Fidelis*."

I can-

* Sir Richard's words (Hard Meaſure p. 3.) are "The "late Lord B. left Mr. John Hill executor to his will and be-"queathed the *property* of his Children to his care." And this is all he means by ſtyling Mr. W. H. his ward. Their *education* he allows to have been ſuperintended by another; nor does he appear in the leaſt diſpoſed to ſhare the ſmalleſt portion of the *honour* ſuppoſed to reſult from this branch of the important truſt. He leaves it all ~~unenvied and~~ unſhared to the Right Reverend Prelate to whom their education was transferred.

I cannot help noticing another ſentence on this ſubject: He ſays, "I underſtand a complete "anſwer will be *ſpeedily* made to this inſidious "and ſpecious charge, about Mr. Hill's being "*guardian*." But as Sir Richard never made it, the inſinuation is falſe, and the epithets he annexes to it rebound on himſelf. Upon comparing the above paſſage with one that occurs in *The Hilliad*, p. 5. on the ſame ſubject, a little more dilated in a long note there, I find nothing but poſitive and unfounded aſſertion. The "com-"plete anſwer" is the following. "Mr. John "Hill had little or no trouble* in the buſineſs." *Complete* indeed!—in miſrepreſentation, and improbability. This writer, who is the panegyriſt of his aſſociate in the ſame *honourable* cauſe, would do well to remember, that aſſertion and proof are different things; and that a miſ-ſtatement of facts is not the leſs criminal, becauſe *two* individuals combine together, as its authors.

Before I conclude this addreſs, I beg leave Gentlemen, to ſubmit one particular to your conſideration.

* In a note of *The Hilliad*, p. 5, the author ſays, "For "THEIR *trouble* and *pains* they had a legacy bequeathed them "of £.200 each." In the Addreſs to Sir R. *Fidelis* ſays, Mr. John Hill had "*little* or *no* trouble." TRUTH connects the *trouble* and *pains* in this buſineſs *equally* with the exertions of that gentleman, as with thoſe of the other executor; but that truth eſcaped him unawares: On another occaſion, to ſerve a purpoſe, all Mr. Hill's "TROUBLE and PAINS" ſink into "*little* "or *no* trouble." Partiality is always inconſiſtent, and malice blaſts the cauſe it would defend. Theſe writers ſhould be more accurate in *comparing notes*.

ſideration. You have now had a fair opportunity of ſeeing on what weak grounds "*Fidelis*" has dared to arraign the character of a reſpectable Baronet, and to brand it with the ſhocking imputations of diſhonour and corruption, of villainy and folly; and that, in executing the taſk of flagitious and ſly aſſaſſination, he has overſtepped the bounds of truth, juſtice, and even probability. Nothing too could be more inſidious or artful, than the deſign of this writer; who copies "the malicious ſpirit of Macbeth's weird ſiſters, "employing her ſpells and incantations to blaſt "LIVING merit." He knew, that there were many in the Town of Shrewſbury of different denominations, who, from their own profeſſed veneration for religion, are taught to feel ſuperior reſpect for men in high life, whoſe character it adorns. Apprehenſive that Sir Richard's pretenſions, in this point of view, might intitle him to ſome reſpect, and be eventually advantageous to the intereſts of the cauſe which he patronizes; here it was that "*Fidelis*" ſaw it neceſſary to aim his moſt envenomed blow. If he could but repreſent Sir Richard to *churchmen* "as the head of "a *ſect*"*; to the religious, as profligate; and to

 the

* Sir Richard never profeſſed himſelf to belong to any "ſect" as ſuch, ſave to that which was once "*every where ſpoken againſt*" much leſs has he ever aſpired to the honour of being "*the head*" of one. The title is, in every ſenſe of the modern uſe of the term, inapplicable to *him*; though his benevolence embraces chriſtians of all denominations. But this charge, which is the invidious cant of men of *no religious principles* whatever, is frequently made to excite odium, and bring religion itſelf into diſrepute. Atheiſm, infidelity, and hypocriſy, have all their reſpective MASQUES; but their dialect is the ſame.

the irreligious, as an *hypocrite*, he concluded that his buſineſs would be done; and that even "the "gold within the purſe" † of Sir Richard, would not be able to counter-act the operation of this ingenious and two-edged ſtigma, when put in circulation throuh the medium of a venal and proſtituted preſs.

Such was his deſign. But truth having wreſted the javelin from the hand of the aſſaſſin, and proved *that* character invulnerable, which he thought lay moſt open to detraction, he has wounded no hand but that which lifted the weapon to ſtab the reputation of innocence and virtue. Diſgrace, therefore, diſappointment, and keen remorſe, if he be ſuſceptible of any, can be the only bitter fruits of ſuch unparalleled defamation. He has now only to brood over ſome *new* plan of infamy, under a new name, to give vent to the malice and mortification which muſt alternately agitate his feelings, in a retroſpect of the ignominy he has brought on himſelf and on the cauſe, of which he has ſtood forth the zealous but inſufficient advocate. From you, therefore, Gentlemen, who, I am perſuaded, do not want another ſyllable in vindication of the character of Sir Richard Hill, I now turn,

† See a remark on this ſubject, full of impertinence, in the laſt page of *The Hilliad*.

To FIDELIS;

SIR,

When I ſuppoſed in p. 8, that no perſon *in* Shrewſbury could be the author of the paper bearing *your* fictitious ſignature; and, in p. 12. that it was, probably, written by the author of "The Hilliad;" my ſuppoſition, in the former inſtance, aroſe from the favourable opinion, I entertained of the inhabitants in general, and, in the latter, from the coincidence, which is ſo obſervable between ſome references in your paper and certain *notes* in that Poem, to which the reader is directed.

An anonymous letter, which I have ſince received, could I pay any *ſerious* attention to it, would lead me to alter that ſuppoſition. But, the *names* mentioned in that letter, are too reſpectable, to induce credit to the information of my unknown correſpondent. So that I adhere to my original ſuppoſition, and will not even implicitly arraign the reputation of any Gentleman, by vague conjecture or remote alluſion. And it would really grieve me to receive any *authentic proof*, that the *fugitive paper*, which is the ſubject of my animadverſions, had for its author any inhabitant of the town or vicinity of Shrewſbury. Yet it will not be uncandid to ſuſpect that "*Fidelis*", like Janus, may have *two* faces, or occaſionally, like *Cerberus*, THREE; that the name you have aſſumed, in its *plural* application, may, in

in point of number ſometimes, be as well denominated *Legion*; and that I may have to combat with a ſecret combination of WITS, differing as to *profeſſion* and local ſituation, though united in one common cauſe of ſecreſy and "*maſqued*" defamation. Againſt ſuch a formidable junto, were not truth on the ſide of an author, he might juſtly fear to attack aſſailants thus lying *in ambuſcade*; and tremble for the conſequence of being expoſed to ſo many pens brandiſhed either alternately or in a ſhower of arrows, againſt an individual and *open* adverſary. The current rumour, is that "more *ſcandal* is coming from "the ſame quarter." That ſome perſons have dealt largely in ſuch diſhonourable traffic, by the character they have traduced, the ſlander they have circulated, the epithets they have coined*, and the facts they have miſrepreſented, is too notorious to be controverted or denied. But, after your addreſs to Sir Richard Hill, I ſhould have thought your quiver had been exhauſted, and no more of the inſpiſſated venom of the aſp remained behind. But you return again to the charge, elated, becauſe

* In one of the ſquibs, in which, probably, *Fidelis*, had a hand, Sir Richard is called "*the Saint at Hawkſtone*—*Sir* "*Hudibras* chopping logic", and Mr. John Hill "*a ſtranger* comparatively." The author of this pamphlet is called "a man "with a lean and hungry look", and is at laſt dignified with the title of "a HIRELING *writer*". Such are the flowers of rhetoric, which theſe *Gentlemen* ſcatter through their writings! Who would envy them their accompliſhments as *writers*, or their pretenſions as *men of honour*? Behind a *maſked battery* ſome men will ſay any thing.

cauſe no immediate anſwer† appeared to your calumniations. Your "Meaſure for Meaſure" is advertiſed, and another fugitive piece bearing your favourite ſignature was circulated on Saturday laſt. You have grown confident by our forbearance, and have added temerity to guilt.

I was in hope, that an interval of cool reflection ſucceeding the moment of intemperate heat, when you penned your late addreſs, you might have abated of the virulence of your charges, and, inſtead of a repetition of the offence, have ſent forth ſome retractations. But how was I ſurpriſed and grieved to ſee you again with your "*maſque*" on, avowing your former ſentiments, and blending the groſſeſt calumny with the moſt contemptible ſatire! uniting the gravity of argument ſuch as it is, to the ſportive ſallies of petulant and borrowed verſe! and thus treating with ſneer and levity what ought to be bedewed with your tears, and to ſuffuſe your cheek with bluſhes! theſe, the mark of conſcious ſhame; thoſe, the evidence of contrition! You have, Sir, no doubt paſſed through the *formalities* of a liberal education. But the *fruits* of it betray neither the *fragrance* ‡ of virtue, nor the characteriſtic

† The paper ſigned "*Amicus Veritatis*, one line of which I never wrote and never ſaw, till I ſaw it in print, was intended, it ſhould ſeem, not as a formal *anſwer*, but as a call to "*Fidelis*" to throw off his "*maſque*".

‡ Witneſs the following *elegant* language. "This child of "dirt that STINKS and ſtings——the LYE ſo oft o'er-thrown."

teriſtic features of genuine politeneſs. Your language is diſgraced by low proverbial vulgarity, and tinctured with ſentiments, which a man of good-breeding ſhould not ſuffer to eſcape his pen; unleſs you mean, by the aſſumption of a borrowed name, to aſſume alſo with it, a character incongruous with the pretenſions of a *Gentleman*. With a ſort of triumphant levity, you boaſt of "making the *galled jade wince*." If you apply this vulgariſm to the Gentleman, whom you have ſo wantonly aſperſed, I aſſure you that your ſuppoſition has neither probability nor decency to ſupport it. RECALCITRAT *undique tutus*. He deſpiſes your efforts to injure him, and laments for your *own* ſake, the malignity with which you attempt it. Conſcious integrity ſecures him againſt mortification; and, that he has nothing to dread from your aſſumptions in argument, I hope ſoon and deciſively to prove.

You aſſert, that Sir Richard Hill was "*the ſole cauſe*" of opening the public-houſes, and, in conſequence of this charge, in which you have evidently begged the queſtion, you make him the author of whatever profligacy, intemperance, or waſte of proviſions may have ariſen from them. It is a great misfortune for ſo bold a caſuiſt, that your argument by an attempt to prove *too much*, proves nothing but the weakneſs of your premiſſes and the fallacy and malignity of your concluſions. To be the "SOLE cauſe" of any proceeding, it is neceſſary

neceſſary, to juſtify ſuch an unqualified imputation, that it *originate* with the perſon on whom the fact is charged; that it meet with his *poſitive* concurrence and *approbation*; that he *reſiſt* in every point of view, and in *every ſtage of the buſineſs*, all propoſals to the contrary; and that *example*, *agency*, and *approbation* ſhould reſt *ſolely* with him, without one competitor in parallel imitation of the line of conduct he adopts. Now Sir, *all* theſe propoſitions muſt be demonſtrated, by an appeal to facts, in order to prove your aſſumption and juſtify your concluſion. The *onus probandi* reſts with you, as affirmant. But, though you have left to me the buſineſs of proving a negative, yet I hope to ſhew the ſophiſtical complection of your logic, and to repel the ſlander of your concluſions.

1. Did the opening of public houſes *originate* with Sir Richard? This you cannot prove; and a ſimple negation on my part, might according to the eſtabliſhed forms of reaſoning, be a ſufficient anſwer. But I aſſert, on the ground of facts, and his own declarations, that he did not *know when* they were opened, nor give any directions about the meaſure. 2. Did they receive his *abſolute* concurrence and *approbation?* So far from it, that to *my own knowledge*, he WROTE in great anxiety to his Brother on the ſubject, and in expreſs DISAPPROBATION of the meaſure. 3. Did he RESIST all propoſals made to him by another reſpectable Clergyman

Clergyman on that ſubject? Let that Gentleman teſtify. 4. Did he firſt ſet the *example?* The entertainments at Attingham were *prior* even to Mr. John Hill's arrival from London, and Mr. W. Hill's *feaſts* on the canvaſs, and afterwards, *took the lead.* All this has been already proved in "a "fair and authentic ſtatement of facts," but, to the authenticity of the facts, and the reaſoning founded on them, you never attempted to reply, for reaſons that require no explanation. But was Sir R. the *cauſe* of Lord Berwick's opening public houſes? For, if one did wrong, example, according to your own ſtyle of reaſoning, cannot juſtify *imitation*; and they who condemn what they themſelves *do*, and do *firſt* alſo, are both inconſiſtent in their clamours, and cenſurable in their charges.

But, Sir, the whole ſophiſm in your reaſoning, and the fallacy in your ſtatement of facts, ariſe from your repreſenting the miſchief of opening public houſes, to have *firſt originated* with Sir R. Hill, by the failure of a treaty ſet on foot in a LATE STAGE of the buſineſs, with the deſign of ſhutting them up. A failure occaſioned, not from Sir Richard's or Mr. John Hill's objection to the *general object* of the treaty itſelf as ſuch, but to the *time* in which it was propoſed, and to the *advantage* which Mr. W. Hill had gained by firſt opening houſes, and a ſuperior number of entertainments. Both lamented the evil in the ſtrongeſt terms;

terms; both applauded the benevolence of the Gentlemen, who ſet forward the treaty; both united in their wiſhes to accede to it on a *reaſonable* ground of prudence, conſiſtent with the deſire of Mr. Hill,* to ſhew a degree of hoſ-

* Mr. HILL's Letter to Mr. LEIGHTON does the writer of it ſo much honour, and is ſuch a direct confutation of the falſe and malicious inſinuations of "*Fidelis*," that, with Mr. H.'s permiſſion, I here ſubjoin it.

"My Dear Sir,

"The very laudable part you and Mr. Archdeacon Plymley are taking, to endeavor as much as poſſible to prevent the bad effects which are too likely to be produced amongſt the lower claſs of Electors, in the unfortunate conteſt between Mr. William Hill and myſelf, merits not only both our thanks, but alſo thoſe of the whole town and neighbourhood.

"You, Sir, know my ſituation, and that my plan has been to act as much as poſſible on the *defenſive*. Therefore my conduct has been in great meaſure *guided by that of my Opponents*; I have always expreſſed to my friends my DREAD *of the conſequences of opening houſes*, and begged of my Agents to avoid *the appearance* of every thing of the ſort *as long as they can*; it therefore has been my anxious wiſh for ſome Gentleman to take the part the worthy Archdeacon is doing, of ſtepping in as a *mediator*, with ſome propoſals that may tend to have the conteſt carried on *with as much good humour*, and as little inconvenience to the town as the nature of the caſe can admit of. I therefore have great pleaſure in unequivocally ſaying, that I ſhall be very happy in entering into any agreement that prudence will admit of, for that very deſirable purpoſe.

"I ſhall be in Shrewſbury to dinner on Monday, and ſtay all night, and will wait on you on Tueſday morning; by which time all parties may well conſider this matter.

"With the moſt grateful thanks for this and many other favors, I have the honor to be, Dear Sir,

"Your much obliged and faithful humble Servant,

"*Preet, 24th Dec.* 1795. JOHN HILL.

"P.S. From ſome converſation I had with my Brother yeſterday, I am certain that the above are his ſentiments, as well as my own."

pitality towards *his* friends *equal* to that of his opponent; or, to uſe his own words, "to enter "into any agreement that PRUDENCE would ad- "mit of for ſo deſirable a purpoſe," and I am authorized here to ſay, from a letter written expreſsly on this ſubject by Mr. F. Leighton, that his opinion coincided with Mr. Hill's on the ground of *prudence* and *equal hoſpitality*. Mr. Leighton's letter was communicated to the author, with full permiſſion to make uſe of it, *in conſequence* of the unfair repreſentations of *Fidelis*. In one to the author he ſays, "Mr. F. Leighton "conſidered himſelf only as delivering a meſſage "from Archdeacon P. to Mr. Hill. He did this "in full confidence that Mr. Hill would meet "the Archdeacon's wiſhes, *as far as* PRUDENCE "would ſuffer him. Mr. Hill's anſwer *proves* that "this confidence was well founded. It appears "from the letters,* that Mr. F. Leighton's *opi- "nion* ALWAYS WAS, that Mr. Hill ought to de- "rive AS MUCH BENEFIT from his hoſpitality, as "his opponent could do from *his*."

It is unneceſſary to quote here, any paſſages from Mr. Leighton's letter to Mr. Hill; as that Gentleman's opinion, expreſſed above, recapitulates its general contents; and tends to eſtabliſh the leading queſtion reſpecting Mr. Hill's *diſpoſition to* accede to the propoſed treaty, though it afterwards, unfortunately went off. Every man of candour, muſt, therefore, ſee what were the fair

* That paſſed between Mr. Hill and Mr. Leighton.

fair motives that prompted him, *at this juncture*, to *continue*, what every man of candour and diſcernment muſt acknowledge to have been juſtified by the peculiarity of the caſe,—by *antecedent example* on the part of his Opponent, by *neceſſity*, and a regard to the *favourable opinion* of the Electors through an *equal* diſplay of *hoſpitality*. But I am free to acknowledge, that nothing but ſuch a concurrence of peculiar circumſtances could juſtify the meaſure even on Mr. Hill's ſide. And the oppoſite one, which is deſtitute of all theſe, is, both as to the *origin* of the entertainments, and the *mode* of conducting them, not equally defenſible.

You miſrepreſent again, when you alledge that Mr. Hill "*refuſed*" to ſhut up the public houſes, though application had been made to him for that purpoſe. That he *declined* doing it, at a particular time, and under particular circumſtances, already mentioned, is admitted. But that his *refuſal* was *abſolute*, *unconditional*, and *unqualified* by *any* deſire to accede to the treaty on any grounds whatever, is contradicted by the expreſs declarations of his own letter already produced. But it was your intereſt to repreſent this as well as other matters differently, leſt you ſhould be compelled to mix one grain of allowance with the acrimony of invective and the partiality of repreſentation.

I have now proved, in detail, that Sir Richard had no hand in the *origin* of opening houſes; that he never gave any poſitive concurrence to the meaſure; that he lamented and diſapproved of it from the beginning; that he expreſſed repeatedly, and by letter to his Brother, his diſapprobation of it; that Mr. W. Hill, took the lead in ſcenes of *hoſpitality*; and that Sir Richard cannot with truth, juſtice, or any ſhadow of candour, be charged with being the "cauſe" of the meaſure, ſtill leſs with being the "*ſole*" cauſe. As if apprehenſive that the fallacious ſtatement you have given in your *ſecond* paper was defective in proof; or, as if you wiſhed to crown the whole by one demonſtrative fact, you ſay, "As the "houſes could not be kept open without *his* aſſiſt-"ance, his Brother's refuſal to ſhut them muſt "have proceed from *him.*" Therefore Sir Richard was "the SOLE CAUSE"! *Argumentum palmarium!* As if Mr. Hill was ſo very poor and dependent, that *he* could not afford the expence of a few ſuppers, given to his conſtituents! This good writer's *modeſty* and his argumentative concluſions are perfectly at *par!* But by *whoſe* aſſiſtance was it that Mr. William Hill opened *his* houſes, and ſupported the expence? By your own reaſoning, it is plain, that even *cæteris paribus*, the *totality* of the "cauſe" of opening the houſes is at leaſt *divided* between the two ſupporters of the Brothers. But, according to *my* reaſoning, ſupported as it is, by the moſt indiſputable evidence, the real CAUSE, the SOLE, ORIGINAL, UNPROVOKED, and

and UNNATURAL CAUSE of ALL THE MISCHIEF in all its gradations of animoſity, diviſion, expence, exceſs, &c. IS, THE OPPOSITION, to our preſent Member, the reſult of a moſt unpopular and almoſt unprecedented "COALITION." When *Fidelis* wants to explore the origin of all our diſturbances, let him not ſtop at ſome of the *ſtreams*, but trace them up to their ſource, *that* OPPOSITION: for, *that* is the *ſole* and original cauſe of all, that men of peace and virtue at this moment deplore, though *ſome* may not be candid enough to acknowledge it.

And now, *Fidelis*, your "ſole cauſe" being proved to be no real cauſe at all, and your boaſted premiſſes intirely overthrown, what becomes of the heavy charges you would build upon them? or how can you juſtify to the world, or to your own conſcience, the concluſion you have dared to draw, that Sir Richard Hill's mind "is *ſeared as with an hot iron*, and "that he does *not care* what MISERY or PRO-"FLIGACY he ENCOURAGES, ſo that by this means "he can ſecure a ſeat for his brother." You *muſt know* enough of the civil LAW, to be convinced that ſuch defamatory language printed againſt A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT is highly ACTIONABLE; and, that if brought before a court of judicature would expoſe you to penalty and diſgrace. And you *ought* to be ſo far converſant in the divine law as to know, that he who ſteps into the ſeat of judgment, and paſſes ſuch an unqualified

lified ſentence of condemnation on the conſcience, the principles, the moral character of another, as not to leave him a ſingle virtue, incroaches on the ſupreme prerogative of the *Searcher of Hearts*. But "thou that judgeſt another, judgeſt thou "not thyſelf?" You ſeem to forget that the higheſt authority in the univerſe ſays that "With "what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured "to you again." Your "object was to make "Sir Richard *feel* the enormity of his conduct." But how *you* could expect him to *feel*, after you had declared his conſcience to be *paſt feeling*, is a compliment paid to your own vaſt powers at the expence of truth and conſiſtency. My hope is that *you* will be, one day, made duly ſenſible of the enormity of your unprecedented calumny, and repent of it. And then, though you have exhibited the worthy Baronet as deſtitute of any virtue, you would, I am perſuaded, find, to your ſurpriſe, that he has at leaſt *one* left, that of a *readineſs to forgive* even one ſo injurious as yourſelf, and to mitigate the cenſure which the law would inflict on your offence. The wiſdom, to which you have, with unmeaning parade, ſo often made an appeal, is "full of *mercy*." But, in that caſe, its origin is *from above*, becauſe it is a fair tranſcript or emanation from that great ſource of compaſſion which views frail mortals with an eye of infinite lenity. But *that* "*from beneath*," which ſhews its derivation by its nature, is of a diabolical complection; it knows no relenting, and ſoftens no accuſation. And to this ſource alone

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can ſuch invectives as thoſe of *Fidelis* be traced, which flow in a current foul with the turpitude of unprovoked defamation, and impoiſoned with all the bitterneſs of malicious ſeverity; where *mercy* is no ingredient, and *religion* is quoted, only to be wounded and diſhonoured.

You aſſert that "the preſent diſpute is to be "ſettled by *facts* not *names*." So I dare ſay the author of *the Jockey Club* would have ſaid, who, taking advantage of the infirmities, the juvenile follies, the misfortunes, or perſonal defects of ſome men of rank in the kingdom, threw the whole into the moſt execrable farrago of malice and unſoftened calumniation; and, after he had completed his ſcandalous hiſtory, took refuge, as you do, in ſecreſy, and enjoyed the malicious triumph of being *anonymous*. It was never, I believe, noticed, becauſe deemed ſo virulent and rancorous in the extreme, as to be its own anſwer. An unqualified ſatire on the infirmities of mankind, is a ſcandal to human nature itſelf, muſt include the defamer more even than thoſe whom he aſperſes, and betrays at once the machination and the temper of a dæmon. You Sir, have exceeded the atchievements of that renowned chief in defamation, becauſe *your* attack has been, not on a vicious, but a *virtuous* character; not on the ſons of riot, the pupils of Bacchus, the ſpawn of infidelity, the obſcene and hardened licentiate, the ſcorner of virtuous principles and religious reſtraint: No, theſe you have ſpared. But with unſparing malig-

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nity, you have attempted to wound the reputation of a man, who is the reverſe of what you have painted him, and a perfect contraſt to the aſſociates of vice and immorality; one, whoſe character has been vindicated on the higheſt juridical authority, and ſets at defiance your impotent attempts to wound it.

You have charged him "with the corrupt traf-" fic of the public money;" though all who know him, muſt acknowledge that a more independent member never ſat in the Britiſh Senate. But your charge is not ſupported by one ſingle circumſtance of moral probability. His own ſplendid inheritance exempts him from even the *temptation* of ſuch a "traffic"; and having no place, poſt, or penſion under Government, all the channels of corruption are barred to *him*; he is no further concerned in the expenditure of the public money than all the other members of the Britiſh Senate. He has no vices to create wanton profuſion, to gratify the cravings of ambition, and ſatisfy the imperious calls of modern diſſipation. He is under no neceſſity of making a fortune by ſervility and corruption; ſtill leſs is he, if poſſible, under any temptation of putting a prop under a *ſinking one*. Thus diſtinguiſhed by his moral virtues, and by great original and ſome *acceſſional* property, he has no incitements to corruption, and leaves both the temptation and the evil itſelf, to thoſe whoſe miſerable arrangements and extravagant diſſipation make them an eaſy prey to USURERS and the dupes

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of real venality and corruption. Let me fix your attention to the word "CORRUPT". In the eye of the *law*, there is no word of more actionable or offenſive import eſpecially when brought againſt a Member of Parliament, who ought to be pure and uncorrupt from every ſpecies of pecuniary contamination. In the charge you have brought, therefore, you have calumniated unjuſtly a Britiſh Senator. You *have alſo libelled* the COURT and the upright JUDGE who ſits in it, both of whom united in vindicating Sir Richard's character, and in condemning that of his calumniator, the exact counter-part of *Fidelis*. But, great as your offence is, I wiſh not to have you conſigned over to the ſecular arm, or to any tribunal ſave that of your own *conſcience*; there to ſit in judgment on your own guilt, to review its aggravations with remorſe, and to be an impartial judge to yourſelf.

As I have taken you on the ground of "facts not names", and have left you no ground to ſtand upon in point of argument; you have no cauſe to complain but of the defeat and diſgrace, which your management of the cauſe you have undertaken has procured for you. The ground, to a writer in your predicament, ſinks beneath you; while nothing preſents itſelf, were your eyes open to ſee your real ſituation, but the yawning gulph of ignominy, where the names of ſome men are conſigned to oblivion, or remembered only as the diſcarded peſts of ſociety. Certain characters have procured for themſelves, it muſt be allowed, a ſort

of celebrity: but it is the celebrity of aſſaſſins, and monſters in human nature. The hiſtory of *Damien* and *Ravaillae* will live in the annals of infamy, as long as the hiſtory of the world laſts. What poſt of diſtinction or precedency *Fidelis* may occupy among the aſſaſſinators of virtuous characters, I cannot determine, till we know his *full* merit. At preſent his pretenſions are certainly very high. But vice has its gradations, as well as virtue. And, what may at laſt be the pinnacle of his deſerts and his fame, I preſume not to predict. Let me hope that his future temper may be diſtinguiſhed by contrition, and his future deeds characterized by genuine reformation.

Fidelis rejects with diſdain the propoſal of telling his *name* and decyphering his pretenſions. The ground of his avowed and reſolute concealment of both is curious, " I paſs over the pro-" poſal to ſtand forth by name", he ſays, " as I " ſhould do the petulant and *vulgar* attempt to " pull off my maſque at a maſquerade, where I " might not think fit to be *known*". But this *maſquerade* in authorſhip to one of his high *moral* pretenſions is extraordinary; and the alluſion to the uſe of the *maſk* is not a happy one, to juſtify the " petulance or vulgarity", of him who wears it. For were he, at a maſquerade, to accoſt any individual *by name* in the ſame dialect of perſonal obloquy as he hath done on a recent occaſion, his *maſk* would be conſidered as no apology or licence for *defamation*. A very diſgraceful and unceremo-

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nious diſmiſſion from the aſſembly would ſoon convince him to his coſt, that the character of a *maſked calumniator* is unfit for any ſociety; and is only ſuited to the brotherhood of thoſe who commit deeds of atrocity and depredation with *maſks* on their faces,—and for *Fidelis's* powerful reaſon, becauſe *they* as well as *he* "DO NOT THINK FIT TO BE KNOWN"!

Leaving him in quiet and undiſturbed poſſeſſion of all the fame, honours and emoluments that may ariſe from an aſſociation with the *maſked fraternity*; I have only to obſerve, that though he declines to give his own name, he has no ſcruple to give names to others. He has dignified the author with that of "a *hireling* writer." If the publication of my real name to thoſe who know me, be not a ſufficient anſwer to this obloquy, I feel not diſpoſed to offer any other vindication. There is one qualification, however, in a "*hireling*" which, I hope, even *he* will acknowledge, does not belong to me. "The hireling *fleeth*, becauſe he is an hireling." Sordid lucre his object, hypocriſy his *maſk*, deceit and ſecreſy his refuge, GUILT makes him a *coward*. That, from any of theſe motives the author has no cauſe to "*flee*," he hopes to convince the whole corps of *writers in maſquerade*.

But now for the *teſt* propoſed. That your attack on the character of a reſpectable Baronet, has been made in a ſtyle of unprecedented boldneſs every one muſt allow, who has ſeen that moſt

extraordinary addreſs; and that it has excited general abhorrence, as a maſs of unfounded invectives, is equally notorious. If the fruits of your pen are the magnanimous effuſions of conſcious virtue, you can have now no juſt cauſe for concealing your *name*, unleſs you are aſhamed of the cauſe you have undertaken, which, in my opinion has left you with all your "bluſhing honours "thick upon you". As this *Vindication* bears the *name* of its author, and he has in conſequence a right to expect a like openneſs of conduct in you, and all who write on your ſide; as he dares engage that no perſonal inconvenience will be the reſult of your throwing off your *maſk*; if you have one ſpark of honour, juſtice, or real magnanimity; if you would wiſh to reſcue the *innocent* from the ſuſpicions of malignity or credulity; if you would extenuate your offence by a voluntary, and ingenuous avowal; if you would wiſh to eſcape that double infamy which muſt be the conſequence of accidental, or perhaps at laſt of extorted diſcovery; all theſe conſiderations ſhould prompt you inſtantly to divulge your *name*. But *Fidelis*, if you reſiſt all theſe motives, which ought to influence the mind of a man of honour; what muſt the world, what muſt your own party think, or your conſcience witneſs of you, but that you lurk in ſecret the unmanly and maſked aſſailant of a virtuous character, unjuſtly traduced, but now, I truſt, fairly vindicated.

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POSTSCRIPT.

As it was foreign from the profeſſed deſign of the foregoing pages, and, equally ſo, from the *inclination* of the author of them, to enter minutely into the *family diſputes* which have been the reſult of the preſent unfortunate conteſt; he has endeavoured to adhere invariably, to the main object he had in view, *that* of VINDICATION. Had he been diſpoſed to digreſs for the purpoſe of perſonal retort and vindictive recrimination, ample materials offered themſelves for that purpoſe. But the execution of ſuch a taſk, however invited by antecedent provocation, would have been invidious, and has not intentionally made any part of his animadverſions. If he has introduced the *names* of ſome reſpectable perſons on the oppoſite ſide, the introduction of them aroſe from the nature of the ſubject, and not in the ſmalleſt degree from any intention to offer them the ſlighteſt perſonal indignity; ſtill leſs, to commence an attack on their moral character. If he has *repelled* one, made, in a ſtyle of the moſt wanton and indiſcriminate agreſſion on a reſpectable individual, he conſiders himſelf, in that inſtance, as an advocate for the general intereſts of ſociety, to cement the bonds and ſecure the peace of which, the vindication of virtuous characters is abſolutely neceſſary.

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He is too ſenſible of the reſpect due to men of rank, fortune, family, and dignified profeſſion, ever to violate the rules of decorum by a licentious freedom of addreſs, or to diſturb their tranquillity by an inveſtigation of private hiſtories; where, though malice may find room for wanton exaggeration, candour will purſue a nobler object, that of covering defects and commending virtue, of healing animoſities and promoting mutual reconciliation. And he declares moſt ſincerely, that nothing could be a higher gratification to his feelings, than to ſee the preſent conteſt amicably terminated, all former animoſities buried in oblivion, the branches of one reſpectable family in particular again united, and all parties embrace one another as friends. With this view, and from this motive alone, he lays before the public, what follows.

The author of the Hilliad in one of his notes, has repreſented Sir Richard Hill as abſolutely declining a viſit propoſed by Lord Berwick: I am authorized to contradict this invidious aſſertion, unfounded in truth or probability; and I am happy to do it in Sir Richard's own words, becauſe they ſhew the friendly diſpoſition of his heart towards his relations, from whom the heat of conteſt cannot diſunite him in affection.

"It is a groſs miſrepreſentation that Sir Richard Hill declined ſeeing Lord Berwick. The following is the exact truth.—His Lordſhip ſent a ſer-

a ſervant to Hawkſtone about the end of October, appointing any day the next week for a viſit to Sir Richard, who was to ſet out either the Monday or Tueſday following, in order to be in town by the meeting of Parliament on the enſuing Thurſday, and was *actually engaged* to ſtay one night at Lord Dartmouth's, in his road. He therefore informed Lord B. how he was circumſtanced, lamented his inability to receive him at Hawkſtone at that time, but expreſſed his hopes that they ſhould very ſoon meet in London, and added, that his brother Mr. John Hill would certainly wait on him at Attingham the Wedneſday following.

" And ſo far was it from being his wiſh to decline an interview with Lord B. at that time, that he lamented the cauſe which prevented its taking place. Sir Richard alſo declares, that, whenever Lord B. ſhews the ſmalleſt inclination to receive him, he will with the greateſt pleaſure wait on him at Attingham, and leave it to him either to introduce the ſubject of the conteſt, or not to ſay one word on ſo diſagreeable a topic. Sir Richard knows and feels, that *he can moſt cordially embrace Lord Berwick.*"

Though the author declines entering into any diſquiſitions about matters, that relate to converſations where he was not preſent, or to a hiſtory in which he cannot be ſuppoſed to be converſant; yet, he cannot help obſerving, that it is extremely

extremely injudicious and unſafe to make *anonymous* writers, the depoſitaries of *family* tranſactions, or the managers of a *family* controverſy, which in ſome parts of it ought to be diſcuſſed by the parties immediately concerned. Nothing has excited his ſurpriſe more than the *Notes* to the Hilliad, which muſt have been communicated by ſome *reſpectable* PERSONS. Yet how they could ſuffer *ſuch* information to paſs to the public eye, through the channel of a moſt contemptible publication, the writer of which is either aſhamed or afraid to declare his *real* name, is, to the author, one of thoſe facts, on which it would be cruel to ſpeculate, for the ſake of *one Gentleman* in particular. Should the controverſy continue to be conducted in ſuch a form, where many errors may be committed, through inadvertence or deſign, and defamation derive boldneſs, from the *maſk* of diſguiſe which it is allowed to aſſume; no man's moral reputation can be ſafe, and nothing but diſtance, diviſion, and animoſity enſue. Les Grands deſirent ſouvent des gens devoués a leur volonté, des gens à tout faire pour leur ſervice. Ils les deſirent ainſi, je l'avoüe; mais ſi chacun feſoit bien ſon devoir, ils chercheroient longtems avant que de trouver ce qu 'ils ſouhaitent; et cette recherche les rendroit PLUS JUSTES et plus RAISONNABLES.

THE END.

To the READER.

† Several fugitive pieces have appeared againſt *Fidelis*, not one of which was penned by the author of this pamphlet.

On the oppoſite ſide we have been accoſted by another addreſs to Sir Richard Hill, under the title of "Sir Cacoethes," and by one "to the *Toad-eater* of Sir Cacoethes and *Scribbler-general* to &c. by Miso-*Fidelis*." This writer, who ſeems to poſſeſs a ſcurrilous adroitneſs in coining compound epithets, either does not underſtand the *compoſition* he uſes, or he has all of a ſudden changed ſides. For, after having been the encomiaſt and *friend* of Fidelis, he has now ſubſcribed himſelf the *hater* of him. This miſanthropic ſignature is very cruel, ſurely, to an old friend, applauded too, he ſays, "by *good judges!*"——Two of the ſquibs circulated on Friday were ſigned *Alfred*, and *Hampden*. Never were the names of Kings and Patriots ſo abuſed before, by being made to atteſt ſo much ribaldry and nonſenſe. This writer is great in *names* and *epithets*.——But what ſurpriſed me not a little, was to ſee a ſentence from my pamphlet when in the

the preſs, quoted, printed, and publiſhed by *Miſo-Fidelis*. One of the author's proof-ſheets was by ſome means clandeſtinely taken from the preſs for the accommodation of this concealed writer. I really could not help ſmiling at this petty larceny of the preſs, though it appeared diſhonourable and flagitious. *Miſo-Fidelis* ſays, "a ſtray ſheet *fell* into his hands." Of that there is no doubt; and in the ſame way that any plundered property paſſes from the hands of one thief to thoſe of his accomplice.

Shrewſbury,
Feb. 15th, 1796.

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CORRIGENDA.

P. 25. In the note l. 8. dele " and unenvied."

P. 15. l. 24, for " on numerous occaſions his houſe has been on any days of the week," r. " his houſe has been alſo."

P. 31. l. 18, for petulent r. petulant.

P. 44. l. 31, for dery r. very.

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